

Dear Canada's First Ministers: Save our economy and our nature from extinction.

Tariff responses and nation-building projects cannot be accomplished at the expense of our natural heritage.

September 9th, 2025

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., O.C., M.P.

Prime Minister of Canada
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Dear Prime Minister Carney,

Nature builds a stronger Canada

We are writing to Canada's First Ministers to express concern over the trend in legislation at the federal and provincial levels of government that is enabling short-term industrial projects to damage Canada's long-term prosperity and quality of life, by setting aside environmental standards. Such legislation includes the Infrastructure Projects Act in BC, the Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, and the federal Building Canada Act. As our federal and provincial leaders, we are reminding you 89% of respondents to a recent poll agreed that nature is a key part of our identity as Canadians. Canadians want their governments to not just protect them from the impacts of tariffs, they also want protections for our clean air and water.

Nature Canada, along with our partners, represent a network of over 200,000 members and supporters and more than 1,200 nature organizations. For over 80 years, Nature Canada has helped protect over 110 million acres of parks and wildlife areas in Canada and countless species. Together with our partners, Alberta Wilderness Association, Nature Alberta, BC Nature, Nature New Brunswick, Nature Newfoundland and Labrador, Nature Nova Scotia, and Ontario Nature, we represent Canadians from across this country from every walk of life.

Biodiversity loss is not only a threat to wildlife, but also to the clean air Canadians breathe and the water we drink. Nature protects our cities from flooding when wetlands soak up heavy rainfalls like sponges. Peatlands and salt marshes sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. In fact, most of Canada's economic activity comes from nature, including the agricultural, forestry, and fishing sectors. In other words, economic growth and environmental leadership go hand in hand.

Statistics Canada's Census of Environment report titled Harvesting benefits from nature recently reported that Alberta and BC benefit the most for ecosystem provisioning, because of their strong agriculture and forestry sectors, respectively. Large infrastructure



projects in these provinces won't only affect so-called "wild" spaces, they can also harm sectors that use natural resources and impact Canadians' jobs. They also have impacts from lost revenue to tourism industries, through to carbon emissions from disturbing fragile landscapes such as peatlands and coastal areas.

There is also no requirement for project proponents to calculate ecosystem services that an area provides and the economic, environmental, and health impacts that their project may cause. For example, an ecosystem goods and services valuation of the Hudson's Bay Lowlands in Manitoba by the International Institute for Sustainable Development suggested that the existence of this ecosystem provided over \$250 million in annual services through biodiversity, conservation, hunting, tourism, and mental health.

Researchers from Simon Fraser University in the Extinction Paradox program have found that species declines are accelerating despite the fact that legislation to protect nature is actually stronger than ever in jurisdictions like BC. Their research echoes that of others that shows that provincial and federal governments continue to approve projects in sensitive ecosystems (like critical habitat for endangered caribou). Legislation to fast-track development cannot undermine decades of advancement in protecting vital ecosystems and environmental well-being. Furthermore, governments are subsidizing extractive developments. Canada's federal and provincial governments are giving industries like mining, forestry, oil and gas extraction, and fisheries billions of dollars of subsidies every year. Not to mention the billions taxpayers continue to pay to clean up contaminated sites due to lax standards and policy failures to collect adequate financial security from resource companies.

While project proponents often forecast gains for the Canadian economy, through job creation and economic growth, the reality is often exaggerated. Independent audits of these forecasts by the researchers at Simon Fraser found that only 60 percent of forecasted jobs in the forestry sector in BC materialized and many appeared to go to people outside of the local community. In reality, many of these sectors have become increasingly mechanized and employment has actually declined in the last 30 years. There is no process to monitor whether proponents are attaining their economic and productivity targets and no accountability if they underperform.

Finally, when considering how significant the delay of approval processes is for these projects, the researchers at Simon Fraser found that most projects were more likely to be delayed because of economic factors like falling commodity prices than regulatory approvals. The fact that the dominant narrative suggests the opposite demonstrates the influence that industries such as mining and forestry have in the media.

We ask that you:

- Effectively implement the 2030 Nature Strategy and maintain our commitments to the international biodiversity targets outlined in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Identify, redirect, and eliminate nature-harming subsidies at all levels of government.
- Require project applicants to provide ecosystem services valuations that assess the ecological, social, and cultural value of landscapes that would be affected by their projects. While these valuations are subjective, even calculating the stored carbon that would be released by developing fragile ecosystems can help rebalance the calculation and help make a more comprehensive assessment of the decision to support a project. Other factors to include in these assessments could include tourism and recreation values, lost biodiversity including lost breeding habitats for different species, food provisioning including hunting and gathering, and mental health benefits from visiting these locations.
- Create a requirement that any project proponent that applies to have environmental or nature requirements waived or reduced in any jurisdiction, must first make a binding public declaration of how many Canadian jobs the project would produce and what public revenues it would generate, and that the company and its investors would face legal and financial consequences if the project failed to generate those benefits.

Thank you for considering this letter. We are available to meet with you at your convenience to discuss these ideas in more detail.

Sincerely,



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